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OO RUEHBZ RUEHDU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMA RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHTRO

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9393

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE 0244

RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 0266

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 2102

RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS YAOUNDE 001071

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC CM EPET PGOV PREL

SUBJECT: PIRATES ATTACK OIL SUPPLY VESSEL IN CAMEROON,  
NON-AMCIT HOSTAGES TAKEN

¶1. (SBU) At approximately midnight on October 31, unknown assailants in three boats attacked a vessel contracted by the French oil company Total off the Cameroon shore, between Bakassi and Limbe, taking 10 or 11 crew members hostage (no Amcits). According to Total's Cameroon Director, the hostages included 7 French, 1 Tunisian, 1 Senegalese, and 1 or 2 Cameroonians. The attackers reportedly fired gun shots but there were no injuries or fatalities. The vessel, the Bourbon-owned "Bourbon Sagita," was engaged in tanker lifting at the time and several crew members who were left on board called for help from a nearby U.S.-owned Tidewater Marine vessel. According to the Area Manager of Tidewater Marine, there were about 20 attackers, while the Total Director reports that the attackers spoke Pidgin.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: this is the first-ever incident of hostage taking off of Cameroon's shore and comes only ten weeks after Nigeria handed over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon. While it was the first attack in Cameroonian waters in about 90 days, it follows several attacks on land over the past month, including a bold bank robbery in Limbe. American interests are vulnerable to such attacks. Tidewater Marine notes that it has 6-8 vessels at sea off of Cameroon at any given time, many of them in the oil-rich region around Bakassi. Although they are not all U.S.-flagged, these vessels often have Amcit Captains. The U.S. presence in offshore oil here also includes Noble Energy, Pecten, Kosmos Energy, and COTCO (the Chad-Cameroon pipeline and platform). Today's Halloween pirate attack has already made the international media and raises new concerns about Cameroon's maritime security. Post notified the DS Watch and the Operations Center and will closely monitor this latest incident.

GARVEY